

DUCHESNE COUNTY (UTAH). COMMISSION ^[308] MINUTES, 1914#

DESCRIPTION: These minute books record the actions of the county commission, the governing body of the county. The commission was authorized to manage all county business and property. This includes budgeting, equipment purchasing, and auditing; use of county lands; districting for schools, roads, voting, drainage, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex-officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings, etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; incorporating municipalities; and by the 1960s, zoning and planning. All these activities are noted in the minutes. The day's entries are prefaced by the date, names of those present, and where and when they met.

The first meeting of the county commission was held 7 December 1914 in anticipation of Duchesne officially becoming a county on 4 January 1915. The county clerk served as the clerk of the board, recording the minutes.

The commission was authorized to manage all county business and county property. This included auditing all claims against the county and payments by the treasurer. Bids received, and bills and wages paid in conjunction with the activities are noted. The fiscal stability of the county is regularly discussed at the meetings. The commission levied property taxes for county purposes and could call for bond elections. The members served as a board of equalization for county property assessments, with the ability to refund taxes erroneously collected and abate taxes for indigents. Tax abatements and quit claim deeds are particularly common from the 1920s into the 1950s.

Responsibilities noted in the minutes include supervision of the conduct of all county, district and precinct officials, boards, and agencies. All personnel actions are recorded, by individual name, for county employees from janitor to sheriff. Such actions include appointments, hourly or salaried wage increases, requests for car allowances or to use county vehicles,

requests for funds to attend conferences, and resignations. Requisition and bid proposals are similarly detailed covering everything from a single typewriter to oil and road base for major road department construction. Both personnel allotments and departmental purchases form part of audits and annual budgets, although these are just a dollar value per category/department.

The commission created election precincts. Commissioners served as canvassers of elections also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting districts, and assigning polling places. The commission also created road districts, school districts, and sanitary districts and appointed superintendents of such districts. Laying out roads and providing for their maintenance was a major activity noted throughout the minutes. The commission was also responsible for any litigation involving the county. Litigation frequently involved conflicts of jurisdiction with the neighboring Indian reservation.

The commissioners provide for the destruction of certain wild animals, birds, noxious weeds, and injurious insects. Ridding the county of noxious weeds and rodents is a common topic in the minutes. The commission was responsible for public health and safety. The county physician regularly made reports to the commission in the early decades. Programs for water, sewer, waste treatment, and landfills were undertaken in the 1970s. Discussions of provisions for public health nurses and emergency medical treatment provisions are common in the 1970s and 1980s. Services are also begun then for alcoholism treatment, mental health, and programs for the aging. Many services were run cooperatively with other counties or the state.

The commission also made provision for recreation in the county. In the 1960s, the commission began attempts to bring TV to the county, and entries regarding television reception appear regularly thereafter. By the 1970s there were regular discussions on parks, golf courses, and baseball diamonds as well as the more traditional county fair.

The legislature mandated that business licenses be obtained from the county commission for operation in unincorporated county areas; most applications were for liquor licenses. Where the county had a more direct interest, more detailed information is recorded, as in the cases of county leases of property or services, and cooperative agreements made with other governmental agencies or private corporations. Oil and gas leases to private corporations are frequent in the 1950s and appear intermittently thereafter. Cooperative agreements#particularly with adjacent counties, the state, or the U.S. forest service#are frequent by the late 1970s.

A major addition to commission functions was made in 1941 when the commission was empowered to provide for the development and zoning of unincorporated areas of the county and to appoint a planning commission. Entries regarding the zoning of subdivisions begin by the 1960s and become more frequent in the 1970s and 1980s.

ARRANGEMENT: The series is arranged chronologically by date of meeting.

RESEARCH NOTE: Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects or private subdivisions; on private businesses operating within the unincorporated county limits; and on private individuals or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable property within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of Duchesne county (up to and including the incorporation or disincorporation of municipalities) was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

RELATED RECORDS: While the minute books summarize the meetings of the commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Duchesne county agencies should be consulted.

PROCESSING NOTE: The Duchesne County Clerk as secretary for the Duchesne County Commission should be contacted for current holdings. Filming was begun in 1992. The series was processed by A.C. Cone in June 1995.

CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Description	Volume
1	1914, Dec	1
	7-1921, Jun 20	
	1921, Jul 5-1936, 2	
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2	1937, Jan	3
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3	1951, Jan	4
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